**Montana Statewide
Dropout and Graduate Report
2009-10 School Year**

May 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE), nationally one-third of students, 1.3 million each year, fail to graduate. The AEE suggests that these low rates have for too long been "obscured … by inadequate accountability systems at state and federal levels."

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has been implementing improvements to its processes for tracking student achievement, including graduation and dropout rates, since 2007-08. These improvements include the implementation of a student information system, AIM-Achievement in Montana, which collects enrollment, demographic and program participation information at the individual student level.

The advent of a statewide student information system using data verified and cleansed at the state and local level has improved the accuracy and reliability of Montana's dropout data. This report reflects the third year of collecting and verifying data using Montana's statewide student information system.

Student data from the first year of implementation of AIM (2007-08) showed a sharp increase in dropout rates. In the same year completion rates declined slightly overall but increased for American Indian students. In the second year of implementation of AIM (2008-09), the data stabilized with a slight decline in the number of dropouts for all students, but an increase in the American Indian dropout rate. Graduation and completion rates both declined with two years of verified Student Information System data. What would the third year hold?

In this report for 2009-10, the number of dropouts decreased dramatically for all students and the statewide dropout rate declined to 3.0 percent for grades 7-12 compared to 3.6 percent

for the previous year. The high school dropout rate decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 4.3 percent in 2009-10 compared to 5.1 percent in 2008-09. More males than females dropped out and the 12th grade continues to show the highest dropout rates.

The dropout rate for American Indian students in grades 7-12 decreased to 7.2 percent compared to 8.8 percent for the previous year. In particular, the dropout rate for American Indian high school females decreased sharply from last year, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points. American Indian students show the highest dropout rates in the 11th grade and drop out more often in the state's largest schools than at smaller schools on or near a reservation.

The dropout numbers and rate for White students decreased from last year; however, White students now make up a larger share of the 7th and 8th grade dropouts than ever before.

For school year 2009-10, the calculation of the completion and graduation rate includes three years of student-level data from AIM. Completion rates for all student groups increased compared to 2008-09 data. The completion rate for the Class of 2009 was 81.9 percent compared to a rate of 82.1 percent for the Class of 2010. The graduation rate was 80.7 percent for the Class of 2009 compared to a rate of 80.2 percent for the Class of 2010

1) *Completers* are the count of individuals who: completed the high school graduation requirements of a school district, including early graduates, during the previous school year, or completed the high school graduation requirements of a school district at the end of summer prior to the current school year.

2) *Graduate* is an individual who: completes a district's graduation requirements in four years or less from the time an individual

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enrolled in the 9th grade, or has an Individu-
alized Education Program (IEP) allowing for
more than four years to graduate.

Introduction

This report provides information on students
who graduated or dropped out of Montana
public, state-funded, and nonpublic,
accredited schools, during the 2009-10 school
year. Increasing dropout rates and decreasing
completion and graduation rates have spurred
much research into this subject in Montana and
nationwide. The reports mentioned below are
representative of the research but are far from
the only organizations doing research in this
field.

The Impact of Dropping
Out of School

Consequences of dropping out include in-
creased chances of being in poverty, being
unemployed, being on public assistance, being
in prison, being divorced, or being a single
parent according to a 2006 study funded by
the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation called,
*"The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School
Dropouts."* On average, high school dropouts
earn $9,200 less per year than high school
graduates, and about one million dollars
less over a lifetime than college graduates.
Dropouts were three times more likely than
college graduates to be unemployed in 2004;
40 percent of dropouts receive some type of
government assistance, and dropouts are eight
times more likely to be in jail or prison than a
high school graduate. If a dropout resorts to a
life of crime and drugs, the lifetime cost to the
nation is between $1.7 and $2.3 million.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Educa-
tion the lost lifetime earnings in Montana from
dropouts last year alone totals nearly $830
million. Montana would save more than $29.8

million in health care costs over the lifetime
of each class of dropouts. The economy of
Montana would see a combination of crime-
related savings and additional revenue of
about $19.6 million each year if the male high
school graduation rate would increase by just
5 percent.

Why Students Dropout

There is no formula to foretell who is at risk of
dropping out. In *"The Silent Epidemic, Perspec-
tives of High School Dropouts,"* young people
who left high school without graduating
indicated the top five reasons for dropping out
were: classes were not interesting, the student
missed too many days and could not catch up,
bad influences (hanging out with the wrong
crowd), too much freedom (both from parents
and schools), and failing grades.

In the survey of high school dropouts con-
tained within *"The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives
of High School Dropouts,"* 88 percent had pass-
ing grades with 62 percent having "C's and
above"; 58 percent dropped out with two years
or less to complete high school (58 percent
of Montana's dropouts were in 11th or 12th
grade); 81 percent recognized that graduating
from high school was vital to their success; and
74 percent would have stayed in school if they
had to do it over again. In the same survey, 80
percent of the students who dropped out did
less than an hour of homework each day in
high school.

Graduate and Dropout Definitions
and Data Collections

Each fall, Montana's K-12 schools report grad-
uate data for all high schools and dropout data
for grades 7 through 12 for the previous school
year. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
(NCLB) greatly increased accountability for

student academic achievement for all public schools. The determination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB requires that public high and 7-8 schools report dropout and graduate data not only by gender and race/ethnicity, but also by the following student populations: economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, and migrant. In addition, public high schools must also report graduate data by whether students graduated "in the standard number of years" (i.e., "on-time").

Graduate Definitions and Data Collection

Montana accredited high schools report graduate numbers to the OPI each fall for the previous school year using the definition in the box to the right.

Dropout Definitions and Data Collection

Dropout rates can be calculated and reported in three different ways:

1) An underline event rate provides a snapshot of those who drop out in a single year;
2) A underline status rate is the proportion of the population who have not completed school and are not enrolled; and
3) A underline cohort rate provides a more comprehensive picture which follows a sample group of students over time and generalizes their rate to a larger group.

This report uses an event rate adapted from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the U.S. Department of Education. The rate is consistent with the requirements of the NCES Common Core of Data (CCD) reporting.

Data Limitations

Because the number of students in racial minority groups and enrolled in small schools are relatively low, completion, graduation, and dropout rates can fluctuate sharply from year to year. For example, in a class with 10 students, one dropout would translate to a 10 per-

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Graduates are the count of individuals who:
1) completed the high school graduation requirements of a school district, including early graduates, during the previous school year,

or

2) completed the high school graduation requirements of a school district at the end of summer prior to the current school year.

General Education Development Test (GED) recipients are not counted as graduates.

Standard Number of Years (i.e., "On-time") Graduate is an individual who:
1) completes a district's graduation requirements in four years or less from the time an individual enrolled in the 9th grade,

or

2) has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) allowing for more than four years to graduate.

Dropouts are the count of individuals who:
1) were enrolled in school on the date of the previous year 's October enrollment count or at some time during the previous school year and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count;

or

2) were not enrolled at the beginning of the previous school year but were expected to enroll and did not re-enroll during the year ("no show") and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count;

and

3) have not graduated from high school or completed a state or district-approved high school educational program;

and

4) have not transferred to another school, been temporarily absent due to a school-recognized illness or suspension, or died.

cent dropout rate. A more realistic indicator for small schools and racial minority groups is an average of several years. Montana's student information system is now able to track students across schools and school years. Beginning in school year 2006-07, the process for counting dropouts became more precise by putting into effect Montana's statewide student information system, AIM. The use of the AIM system reduced differences in educator interpretations of the dropout definition. AIM documents student migration into and out of the PK-12 education system. Data about student migrations are used by AIM to determine if a student is a dropout. In AIM, dropout counts are based primarily on AIM enrollment records and AIM end status, which is a code that indicates if a student has graduated, transferred to another school or dropped out. The 2007-08 school year dropout and graduation numbers were the first to go through a thorough quality assurance process, which included sending the complete dropout and completion numbers to the school for signature confirming dropout and completion numbers.

Analysis of Montana's Dropout Rate

Compulsory Enrollment Laws

Montana law requires students to stay in high school until they are 16 years of age. Specifically, Section 20-5-102 (1) Montana Code Annotated states: "Except as provided in 20-5-102(2), any parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the care of any child who is 7 years of age or older prior to the first day of school in any school fiscal year shall cause the child to be instructed in the program prescribed by the board of public education pursuant to 20-7-111 until the later of the following dates: (a) the child's 16th birthday; (b) the date of completion of the work of the 8th grade."

Calculating a Dropout Rate

Dropout rates are calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by the enrollment count on the first Monday in October. Dropout rates vary for different student groups (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender). Calculating and analyzing dropout rates is key to determining if certain groups of students are more likely to dropout and can be used in developing and targeting dropout prevention efforts.

The Office of Public Instruction has implemented a Student Records Confidentiality Policy, which prohibits the release of data for student counts under ten, including racial/ethnic, dropout, completer and graduate student groups. Counts under ten are indicated by the <10 symbol in all of the applicable tables in this document.

2009-10 Montana Statewide Dropout Rate Summary

- Montana public and private accredited schools reported that 2,010 students dropped out of grades 7-12 during the 2009-10 school year. The corresponding October enrollment was 67,043 yielding a dropout rate of 3.0 percent for the 2009-10 school year.

- The 7th and 8th grade dropout rate was only 0.2 percent, but represented 43 students leaving school at a young age.

- The high school dropout rate was 4.3 percent.

Dropout Rate Formula

Dropout Rate = Number of dropouts/October enrollment X 100

Example:

The 2009-10 Dropout Rate for Montana Accredited Schools = 2,010 Dropouts for grades 7 through 12, divided by 67,043 students enrolled in October 2009, multiplied by 100 = 3.0%.


- Overall dropouts decreased from the previous year. This was the third year of increased accountability in the student information system (AIM) and quality control procedures.

- Peak dropout rates have traditionally been observed in grade 10, when many students turn 16 and can legally exit the school system. For the 2009-10 school year, however, peak dropout rates were observed in grade 12.

- For the 2009-10 school year, American Indian students represented 10.9 percent of the total school enrollment for grades 7 through 12, but account for 26.0 percent of the total dropouts.

- The 2009-10 American Indian dropout rate for Montana grades 7 and 8 was 0.6 percent (Table 3 on page 8).

- The 2009-10 American Indian dropout rate for Montana high schools was 10.6 percent (Table 3 on page 8).

- The overall dropout rate for American Indian students decreased by 1.7 percentage points from the 2008-09 school year, while the dropout rate for White students decreased by 0.5 percentage points in the same period.

Table 1			
2009-10 Montana Dropout Rate Summary			
	Dropout Rates	**Dropout Count**	**Enrollment**
Overall Total (Grades 7-12)	3.0%	2,010	67,043
HS Total	4.3%	1,967	45,356
Gr 12	5.6%	610	10,900
Gr 11	4.9%	546	11,094
Gr 10	4.0%	462	11,425
Gr 9	2.9%	349	11,937
7 & 8 Total	0.2%	43	21,687
Gr 8	0.3%	28	10,934
Gr 7	0.1%	15	10,753
Gender			
Male	3.3%	1,151	34,514
Female	2.6%	859	32,529
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian	7.2%	524	7,315
Asian	1.2%	<10	695
Hispanic	4.1%	71	1,736
Black	4.2%	26	623
Pacific Islander	3.2%	<10	185
White	2.4%	1,375	56,489

- Montana's dropout rates increased from 2004-05 through 2007-08 then decreased slightly in 2008-09 and decreased sharply in 2009-10. (See Figure 1 on following page).
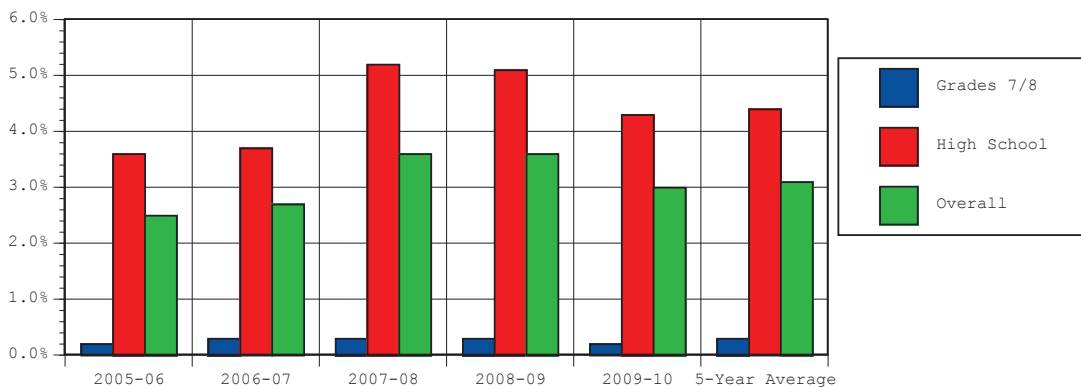
Dropout Rates for Different Student Groups

Since dropout rates can vary greatly among certain student populations, calculating and analyzing disaggregated dropout rates is key to developing and targeting dropout prevention strategies. The data collected by the OPI allows for analysis of dropout rates by grade, gender, race/ethnicity, and school size.

Dropout Rates by Gender
In Montana schools, more males than females are enrolled at every grade level. For the 2009-10 school year, about 51 percent of the total school enrollment for grades 7-12 was male and 49 percent was female. Males have traditionally had higher dropout rates than females for most grade levels. Consistent with previous years, the 2009-10 dropout rate for males in grades 9-12 (4.8 percent), was greater than for females (3.8 percent). Dropout rates for males decreased for all grades except for grade 9, where the rate stayed the same.

Table 2									
2009-10 Montana Dropout Rates by Grade and Gender									
Dropout Rates				**Dropout Count**			**Enrollment**		
Grade	Male	Female	Statewide	Male	Female	State-wide	Male	Female	State-wide
HS Total	4.8%	3.8%	4.3%	1,131	836	1,967	23,320	22,036	45,356
Grade 12	6.3%	4.9%	5.6%	346	264	610	5,529	5,371	10,900
Grade 11	5.3%	4.5%	4.9%	303	243	546	5,698	5,396	11,094
Grade 10	4.6%	3.4%	4.0%	273	189	462	5,896	5,529	11,425
Grade 9	3.4%	2.4%	2.9%	209	140	349	6,197	5,740	11,937
7 & 8 Total	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	20	23	43	11,194	10,493	21,687
Grade 8	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	13	15	28	5,645	5,289	10,934
Grade 7	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	<10	<10	15	5,549	5,204	10,753
Overall Total	3.3%	2.6%	3.0%	1,151	859	2,010	34,514	32,529	67,043

For females, the dropout rates decreased for all grades. The biggest change was observed for the 11th grade males and 10th grade females whose rate declined by 1.1 percentage points. Table 2 on the previous page provides details of the 2009-2010 dropout rates by grade level and gender.

An analysis of dropout rates by gender for the past five years indicates that females drop out at a lower rate at every grade level than males except for 8th grade where the rates are the same. Peak dropout rates for females are observed in grade 11. Dropout rates for males increase steadily through grade 12. The five-year trend indicates that the gap between males and females is widening. (See Figure 3 in the appendix.) .

Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity Categories
Dropout rates vary by race/ethnicity categories. For the 2009-10 school year, Montana school enrollment by racial/ethnic category for grades 7-12 was comprised of 84.3 percent White students, 10.9 percent American Indians, 1.0 percent Asians, 2.6 percent Hispanics, 0.9 percent Blacks, and 0.3 percent Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders.

The 2009-10 dropout rate for American Indian students in grades 7-12 was greater than the statewide average and greater than the rate for White students. For the 2009-10 school year, the combined racial/ethnic categories of Asian, Hispanic, Black, and Pacific Islander yielded a dropout rate of 3.4 percent in grades 7-12. Because enrollment in Montana's public schools for these minority groups is low, annual dropout rates can vary widely from year to year. Averages over a period of years may provide more realistic indicators of the dropout rates for these small groups. (See Table 3 below.)

A Closer Look at American Indian Dropout Rates

On average, American Indian students drop out of grades 7-8 at a rate six times that of White students and out of high school at three times the rate of White students. Over the past five years, American Indian students represented 11.3 percent of the total school enrollment for grades 7-8, but accounted for 48.6 percent of the dropouts. That five-year figure was 63.5 percent in 2007-08 and 71.9 percent in the 2005-06. For grades 9-12, American Indian students represented 10.5 percent of the total

Table 3									
2009-10 Montana Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity Categories									
Dropout Rates			**Dropout Count**			**Enrollment**			
	Grades	Grades		Grades	Grades		Grades	Grades	
	7-8	9-12	Total	7-8	9-12	Total	7-8	9-12	Total
American Indian	0.6%	10.6%	7.2%	14	510	524	2,494	4,821	7,315
Asian	0.5%	1.5%	1.2%	<10	<10	<10	217	478	695
Hispanic	0.3%	6.3%	4.1%	<10	69	71	634	1,102	1,736
Black	0.4%	6.4%	4.2%	<10	25	26	230	393	623
Pacific Islander	0.0%	4.9%	3.2%	<10	<10	<10	63	122	185
White	0.1%	3.5%	2.4%	25	1,350	1,375	18,049	38,440	56,489
Overall	0.2%	4.3%	3.0%	43	1,967	2,010	21,687	45,356	67,043

school enrollment and 23.8 percent of the drop-outs over the last 5 years.

For the 2009-10 school year, dropout rates for American Indian students in grades 7-8 decreased by 0.5 percentage points (nearly one-half) from last year and decreased by 2.1 percentage points at the high school level. Dropout rates for White students in grades 7-8 decreased by 0.1 percentage points and decreased by 0.6 percentage points at the high school level. However, the five-year dropout average increased for White students in grades 9-12 from 3.5 percent to 3.7 percent. (See Figure 2 below and Figures 4 and 5 in the Appendix).

White students dropped out at a much lower rate at every grade level than American Indian students. Peak dropout rates for White students are observed around grade 12, whereas, dropout rates for American Indian students peak a year earlier in grade 11. The highest number of American Indians dropped out in grade 9 and Whites in grade 12. In the 11th and 12th grade, the dropout rate for American Indian students is more than double the rate of White students. The dropout rate for American Indian students in grade 9 is 4.9 times higher than for White students.

Overall in Montana, males drop out of school at higher rates than females. However, this gender difference is not consistently observed for the American Indian students. As illustrated in Figures 7 and 8 in the Appendix, American Indian females have dropped out at a higher rate in two out of the past five years at both the grades 7-8 and grades 9-12 levels. At the high school level, in 2009-10, the American Indian female dropout rate decreased 1.8 percentage points while the American Indian male dropout rate decreased 0.7 percentage points from 2008-09.

The dropout rates for American Indian high school females showed a sharp decrease in school year 2009-10 after showing a strong increase in 2008-09. American Indian high school males showed a decrease, albeit not as strong a decrease as for American Indian females. For White students, the number and percentage of male dropouts decreased in grades 7-8 and the percentage decreased at the high school level. The dropout count and rate for White female students remained unchanged at the grades 7-8 level and decreased at the high school level.

Dropout Rate by Size of District
For the purposes of comparing similarly sized school districts, Montana districts have been identified by size categories based on enrollment numbers.

Figure 2: Montana Dropout Rates - 2005-06 to 2009-10
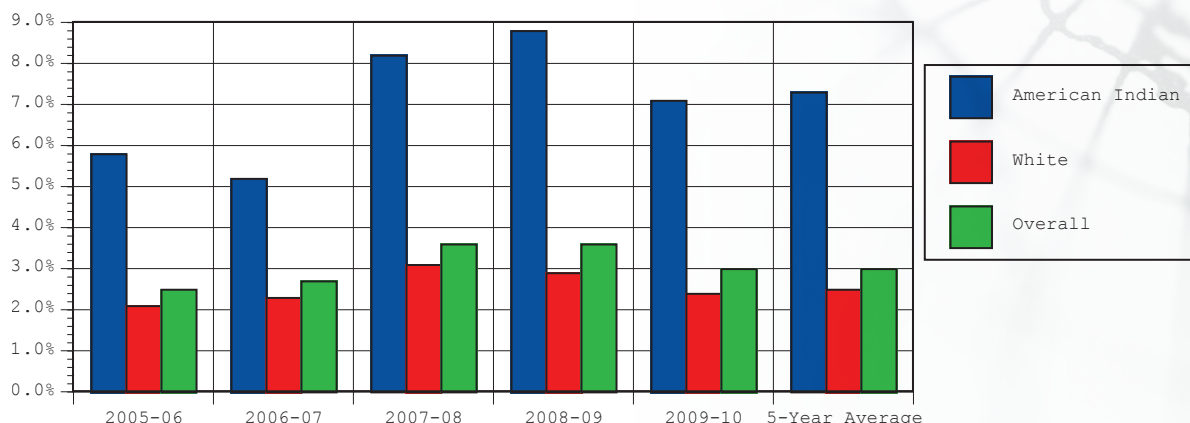
In 2009-10, the highest dropout rates for grades 7-8 were observed for 6E, districts with enrollments under 40. As illustrated in Table 4 on the following page, on average, smaller high school districts tend to have lower dropout rates than larger districts.

The highest dropout rates in school year 2009-10 were observed for 1H districts (more than 1,250 students) and 2H districts (401 to 1,250 students) at 4.7 percent.

- Dropout rates for American Indian high school students (see Table 1 in the Appendix) are highest in 1H districts (more than 1,250 students) at 13.5 percent and lowest for 1K (400 or more students) districts at 3.2 percent.

- Over the last five years, increased dropout rates for American Indian students were observed for 1H, 4H (76 to 200 students), and 5H (65 or fewer students). All other size categories showed a decline except for 3H (201 to 400 students). See Table 4 on the next page.

- Comparing averages based on five-year average data, 1H districts had the highest dropout rate for American Indian students at 13.5 percent. American Indian students make up 6.8 percent of the 1H enrollment. American Indian students have a dropout rate for 1H districts that is more than three times higher than the rate for White students in 1H districts and is 5 percentage points higher than the dropout rate for American Indian students in 2H districts.(See Table 1 in the Appendix.)

- The highest percentage of American Indian students enrolled is in 4H districts at 20.2 percent. The lowest percentage of American Indian students enrolled is in 1K districts at 4.5 percent.

- American Indian students are a more transient student group. The implementation of AIM, the student information system, has greatly improved tracking all transient students including American Indian students.

- The high school dropout rate for White students decreased in school year 2009-10 for every size category except 1K (400 or more students) and 2K (399 or fewer students). Size category 3H stayed the same at 2.6 percent.

Table 4									
Montana Dropout Rate by School District Size									
Level	1E,1H	2E,2H	3E,3H	4E,4H	5E,5H	6E	1K	2K	All Schools
7/8 dropouts									
2009-10 rate	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
2008-09 rate	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%
2007-08 rate	0.1%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
2006-07 rate	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
2005-06 rate	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
5-yr average rate	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
HS dropouts									
2009-10 rate	4.7%	4.7%	3.5%	3.5%	3.7%		2.5%	3.4%	4.3%
2008-09 rate	5.5%	5.7%	4.5%	4.1%	3.2%		2.9%	3.4%	5.1%
2007-08 rate	5.7%	5.5%	3.7%	5.1%	3.0%		3.9%	2.6%	5.2%
2006-07 rate	4.5%	4.4%	3.6%	2.2%	1.9%		2.2%	2.0%	3.7%
2005-06 rate	4.4%	4.3%	2.9%	2.4%	0.7%		2.4%	1.9%	3.6%
5-yr average rate	5.0%	4.9%	3.7%	3.4%	2.2%		2.8%	2.5%	3.5%

The Completion and Graduation Rate

The dropout rates identified thus far in this report are annual snapshots of grade-by-grade dropouts. The dropout data used to calculate those annual rates can be used in conjunction with graduate data to build a high school completion rate or "on-time" graduation rate for a specific class of students.

The Completion Rate

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) developed a completion rate using an estimated cohort method, which utilizes both dropout and graduate data and can be calculated for all accredited schools, but requires data from four consecutive years.

The overall completion rate for the Class of 2010 was 82.1 percent. Females had a higher

Completion Rate Formula
Completion Rate = $ct / (ct + d12t + d11(t-1) + d10(t-2) + d9(t-3))$

Where:
c= number of graduates receiving a high school diploma in 4 years + nonstandard graduates
t= year of graduation
d= dropouts
12, 11, 10, 9 = class level

Example:
The 2009-10 Completion Rate for Montana High Schools = 10,349 graduates for Class of 2010 divided by (2,252 students dropped out over four years plus 10,349 Graduates for the Class of 2010) multiplied by 100 = 82.1%

Table 5							
2009-10 Montana Completion Rate Summary							
	Grade 9 2006-07	Grade 10 2007-08	Grade 11 2008-09	Grade 12 2009-10	4-yr Drop-out Total	**Graduates 2009-10**	**Completion Rate**
Overall Total	347	624	671	610	2,252	10,349	82.1%
Gender							
Male	195	339	376	346	1,256	5,195	80.5%
Female	152	285	295	264	996	5,154	83.8%
Race/ Ethnicity							
American Indian	130	149	152	111	542	900	62.4%
Asian	<10	<10	<10	<10	12	102	89.5%
Hispanic	12	19	31	21	83	210	71.7%
Black	<10	<10	<10	<10	21	69	76.7%
Pacific Islander	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	28	82.4%
White	200	443	476	469	1,588	9,040	85.1%

completion rate (83.8 percent) than males (80.5 percent). The racial/ethnic categories of Asian, Hispanic, Black, and Pacific Islander accounted for only 4.0 percent of the 2009-10 graduates and 5.4 percent of the dropouts over four years. As with dropout rates, the completion rates for these racial/ethnic categories tend to vary widely from year to year. The Class of 2010 completion rate for American Indian students was considerably lower than the overall completion rate and that of White students, as illustrated in Table 5 and Figure 3. American Indian students had a three-year average completion rate of 64.5 percent, lower than the three-year average for White students of 85.4 percent. Slightly increased completion

rates were observed for All, Female and White students for the 2009-10 school year compared to 2008-09. Decreased completion rates were observed for males and American Indian students for the 2009-10 school year.

The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Graduation Rate
Graduation rate, defined as "the percentage of students who graduate from secondary school with a regular diploma in the standard number of years" (i.e., "on-time"), is the required additional indicator for public high schools in AYP determinations. Montana's high school graduation rate is an estimated cohort group rate based on the method recommended by

the NCES. Public high schools must have a graduation rate for the "All Students Combined" subgroup of at least 80 percent or make improvement toward this goal to meet this indicator. Montana's graduation rate is calculated using the formula in the box to the right. The Office of Public Instruction uses AIM, the statewide student information system, to assign each student to a cohort when the student enters 9th grade. Districts are not allowed to move students among cohorts.

The Class of 2010 AYP Graduation Rate for "All Students Combined" was 80.2 percent. (See Table 6 and Figure 4 on the next page.)

Disaggregated graduation rates are not used for determinations on this indicator; however, for the Class of 2010, the American Indian graduation rate was considerably lower than that of any of the student groups. Although graduate and dropout data for the 2009-10 school year has been collected by the OPI, individual school and district AYP determinations, which use these data for the 2010-11 school year, will not be issued and made available until July 2011.

AYP Graduation Rate Formula

Graduation Rate = $gt / (ct + gt + d12t + d11(t-1) + d10(t-2) + d9(t-3))$

Where:

g= number of graduates receiving a standard high school diploma in four years or less (from the time enrolled in the 9th grade) or had an IEP allowing for more than four years to graduate.

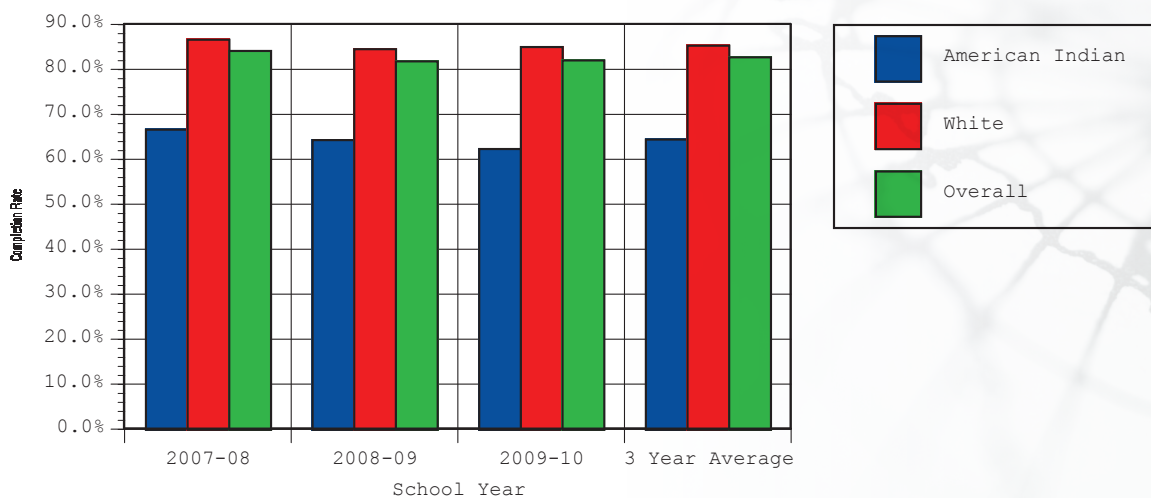c= completers of high school by other means

t= year of graduation

d= dropouts

12, 11, 10, 9 = class level

Example:

The 2009-10 Graduation Rate for Montana Public High Schools = 9,817 "On-time" Graduates for Class of 2010 divided by (2,203) students dropped out over four years plus 222 Not "On-time" Graduates for the Class of 2010 plus 9,817 "On-time" Graduates for the Class of 2010 multiplied by 100 = 80.2 %

Figure 3: Completion Rates

Table 6								
Montana Public High School AYP Graduation Rate for the Class of 2010								
	Dropouts					Graduates 2009-10		
Subgroups	Grade 9 2006-07	Grade 10 2007-08	Grade 11 2008-09	Grade 12 2009-10	4-yr Dropout Total	Not On-time	On-time	AYP Graduation Rate
All Students Combined	345	614	648	596	2,203	222	9,817	80.2%
American Indian	128	141	141	102	512	41	807	59.3%
Asian	<10	<10	<10	<10	11	<10	95	89.6%
Hispanic	12	19	31	21	83	<10	195	67.9%
Black	<10	<10	<10	<10	21	<10	65	72.2%
Pacific Is-lander	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	25	80.6%
White	200	441	465	464	1,570	168	8,630	83.2%

Figure 4: Montana Public High School AYP Graduation Rates for All Students Combined and Race/Ethnicity (School Year 2009-10)
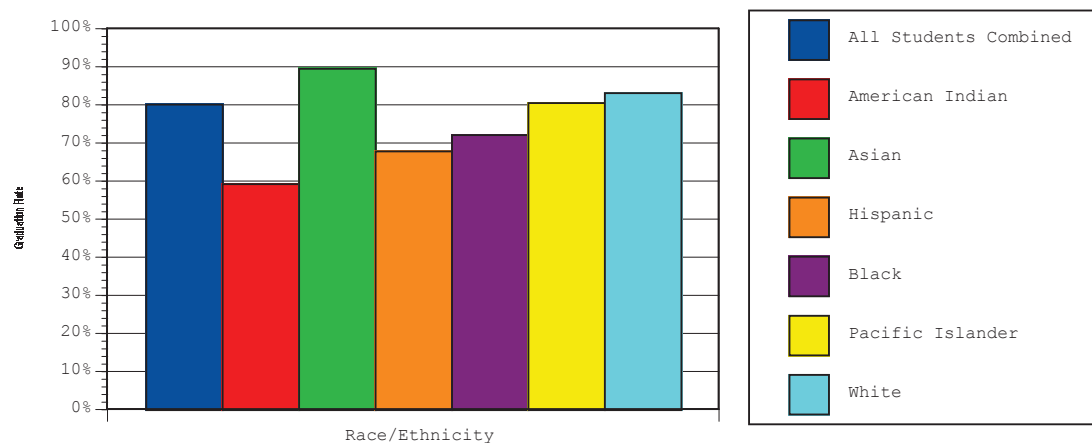
What Helps Prevent Students from Dropping Out?

At the conclusion of *"The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts,"* the authors devised a 10-point plan to reduce the number of dropouts in America. These 10 points are similar to the findings of other groups working to reduce dropout rates and increase high school completion rates:

1) Support methods that collect and disseminate accurate dropout and graduation data;

2) Have early warning procedures in place to keep track of and provide extra guidance to students who are most likely to dropout;

3) Provide adult advocates and student support for students most at need;

4) Increase parental engagement and provide individual graduation plans;

5) Encourage rigorous curriculum for graduation for all students, not just those bound for college. The curriculum should be tough enough that graduates are job and college ready when they graduate;

6) Suggest options for struggling students such as ninth grade academies, alternative schools, or individual instruction plans;

7) Consider raising the compulsory age requirement from 16 to 17 or 18. During the 2009 Montana Legislative Session a bill was introduced to raise the compulsory age to 17, but that bill was defeated. A bill introduced during the 2011 Montana Legislative Session to raise the compulsory age to 18 was also defeated;

8) Expand college level learning opportunities at the high school level such as dual enrollment and Advanced Placement (AP) classes;

9) Research and follow best practices; and,

10) Make dropout prevention a national priority.

References

Alliance for Excellent Education, Montana State Card (March 2009). http://www.all4ed.org/about_the_crisis/schools/state_information/montana .

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Hammond, Cathy. "Dropout Risk Factors and Exemplary Programs, A Technical Report." Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, 2007.

Montana Office of Public Instruction. "Montana Graduate and Dropout Data Collection Handbook," (p.i), September 2006, http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/ADC/FY07/MTHSComDropoutManual.pdf.

"The Silent Epidemic, 10-Point Plan," http://www.silentepidemic.org/solutions/index.htm, 2009 03 24.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1998). "The Condition of Education 1998," (NCES Publication No. 98–013), by John Wirt, Tom Snyder, Jennifer Sable, Susan Choy, Yupin Bae, Janis Stennett, Allison Gruner, and Marianne Perie. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). "Digest of Education Statistics, 2004," (NCES Publication No. 2005-034), by Thomas D. Snyder and Charlene M. Hoffman. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "Understanding Dropout Data," http://dpi.wi.gov/spr/drop_q&a.html, 2009 03 25.

Additional Dropout Resources on the Web

National Center for Education Statistics- http://www.nces.ed.gov/

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network- http://www.dropoutprevention.org/

U. S. Census Bureau- http://www.census.gov/index.html

The Silent Epidemic- http://www.silentepidemic.org/

Alliance for Excellent Education- http://www.all4ed.org/

Appendix

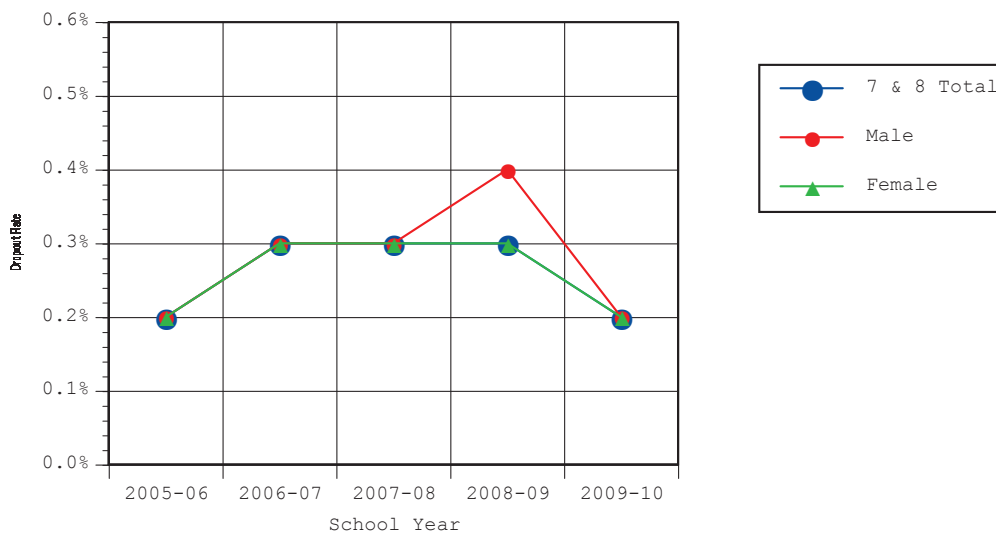## Figure 1: Dropout Rates by Gender for Grades 7-8

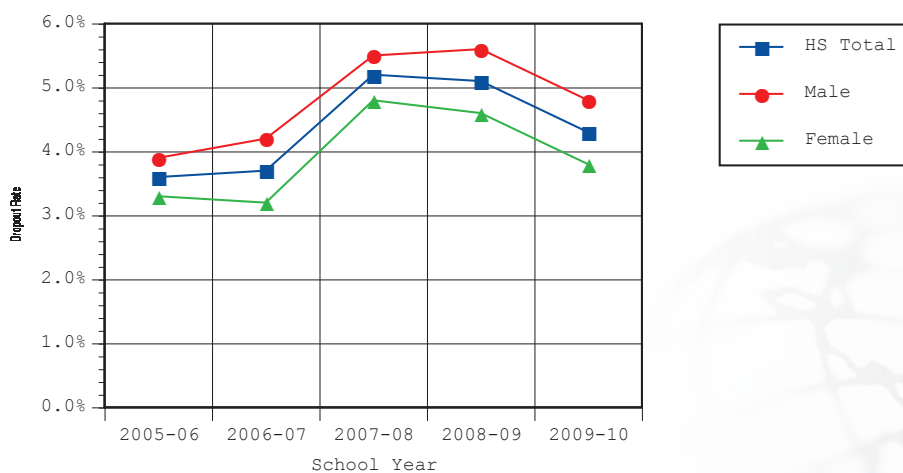## Figure 2: Dropout Rates by Gender Grades 9-12

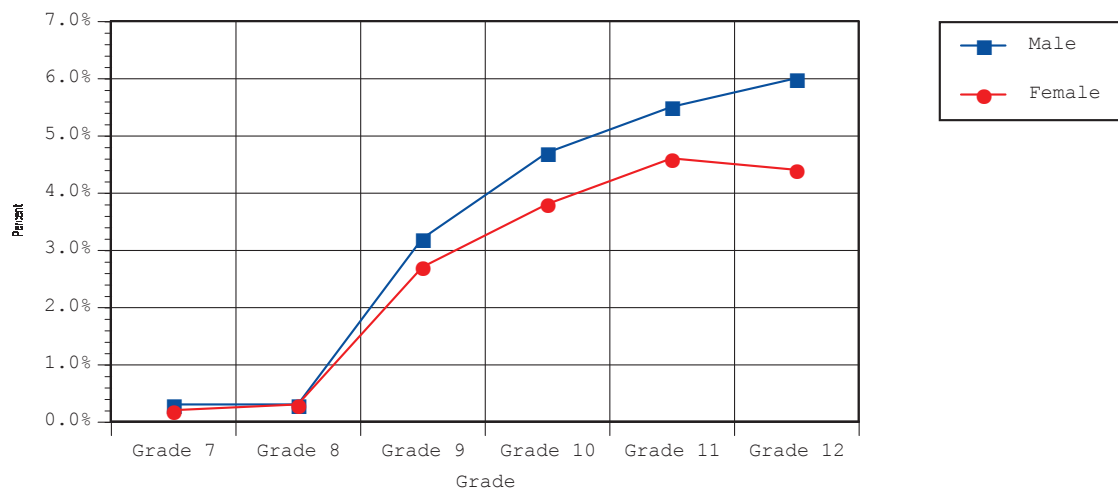## Figure 3: Five-Year Dropout Rates by Gender and Grade

Figure 4: Dropout Rates for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 7-8
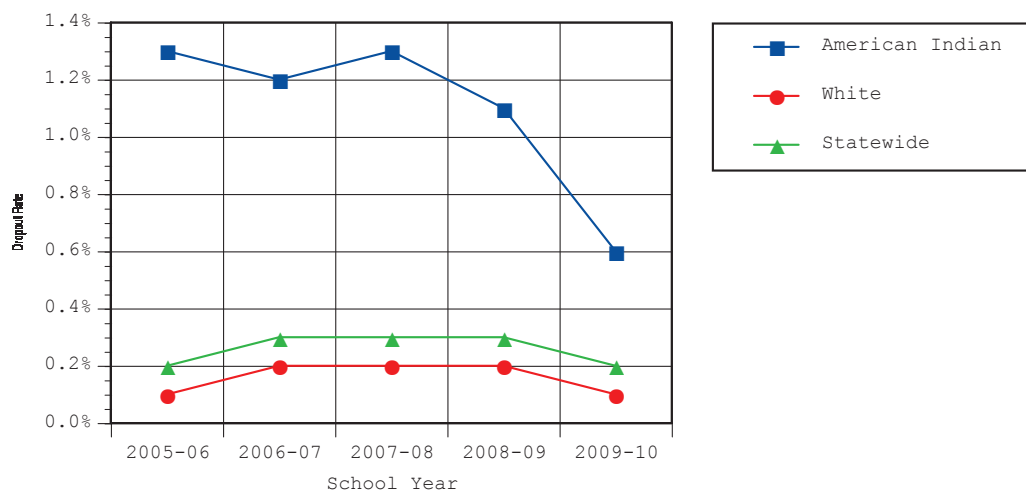

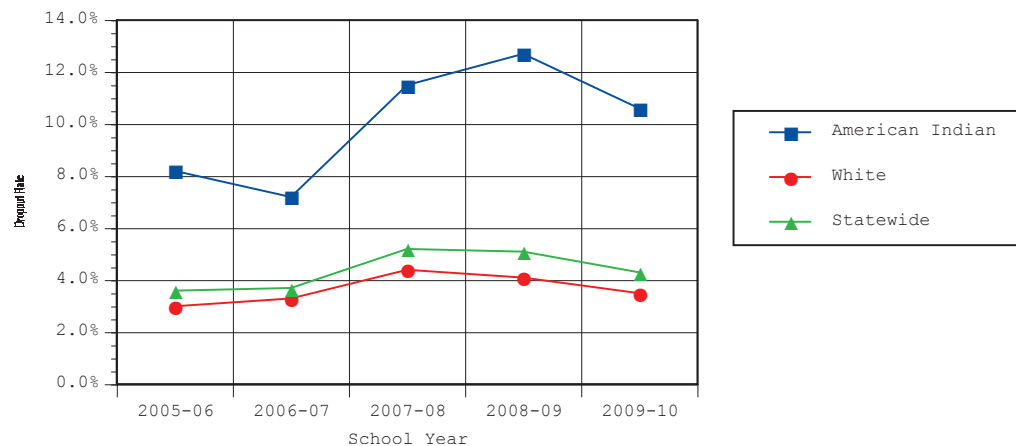## Figure 5: Dropout Rates for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 9-12

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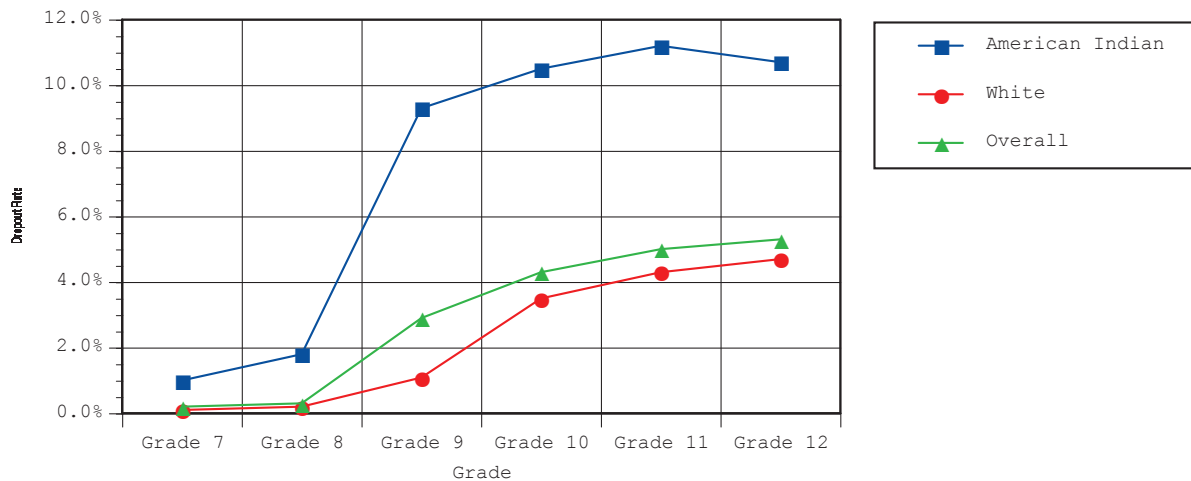**Figure 6: Five-Year Dropout Rates by Grade for Select Race Ethnicity Categories**

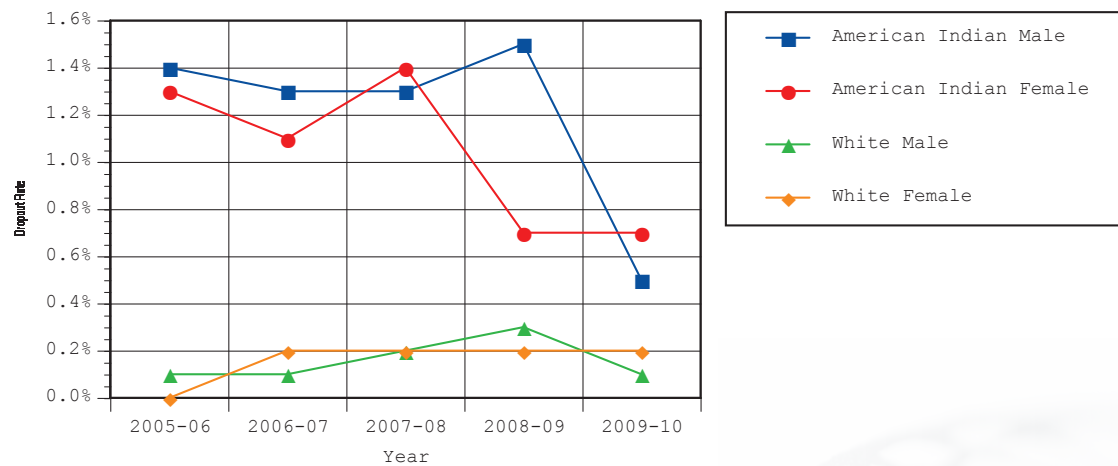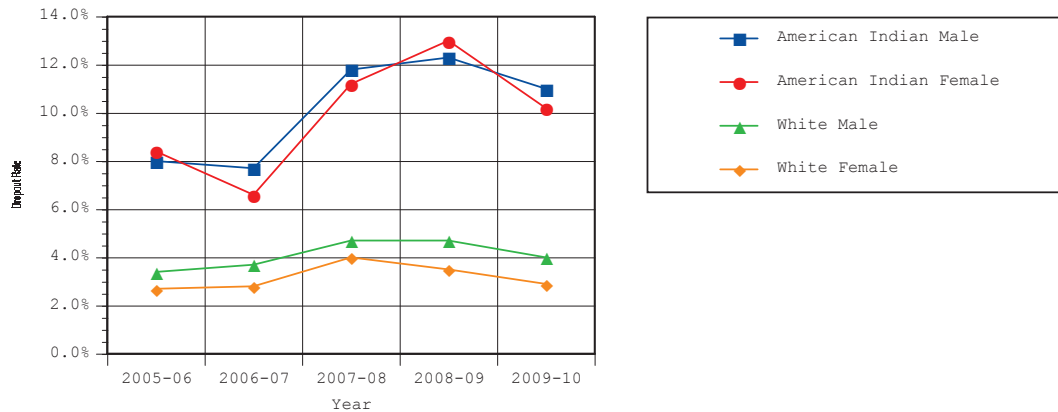**Figure 7: Dropout Rates for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories by Gender Grades 7-8**

Figure 8: Dropout Rates for Select Race Ethnicity Categories for Gender Grades 9-12

Table 1
Five-Year Dropout Rate by School District Size and Race 2009-10

Size Category	Grade Level	American Indian	White	Overall	American Indian Dropout Count	White Dropout Count	Total Dropout Count	American Indian Enrollment	White Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Percent American Indian Enrollment
1E	GR78	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%	17	49	74	2,802	35,829	41,280	6.8%
2E	GR78	0.8%	0.2%	0.3%	30	26	59	3,742	15,709	20,286	18.4%
3E	GR78	2.2%	0.1%	0.5%	49	15	66	2,223	10,762	13,519	16.4%
4E	GR78	1.6%	0.1%	0.3%	31	14	46	1,963	13,306	15,821	12.4%
5E	GR78	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%	<10	<10	15	806	5,071	6,060	13.3%
6E	GR78	1.4%	0.3%	0.4%	<10	<10	<10	73	1,149	1,247	5.9%
1K	GR78	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	<10	<10	<10	480	7,382	8,225	5.8%
2K	GR78	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	<10	<10	<10	440	4,314	4,937	8.9%
1H	HS	13.5%	4.4%	5.0%	785	4,248	5,379	5,798	97,310	108,447	5.3%
2H	HS	8.5%	4.2%	4.8%	525	1,404	2,024	6,211	33,641	42,493	14.6%
3H	HS	8.9%	2.6%	3.5%	345	471	788	3,895	17,971	22,689	17.2%
4H	HS	9.6%	1.9%	3.3%	550	403	941	5,700	21,498	28,276	20.2%
5H	HS	7.5%	1.3%	2.4%	89	72	166	1,185	5,354	6,836	17.3%
1K	HS	3.2%	2.8%	2.7%	26	440	484	804	15,955	17,735	4.5%
2K	HS	7.4%	2.1%	2.6%	76	197	282	1,026	9,422	10,873	9.4%

Figure 9: Five-Year Average Dropout Rates by District Size Category for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 7-8
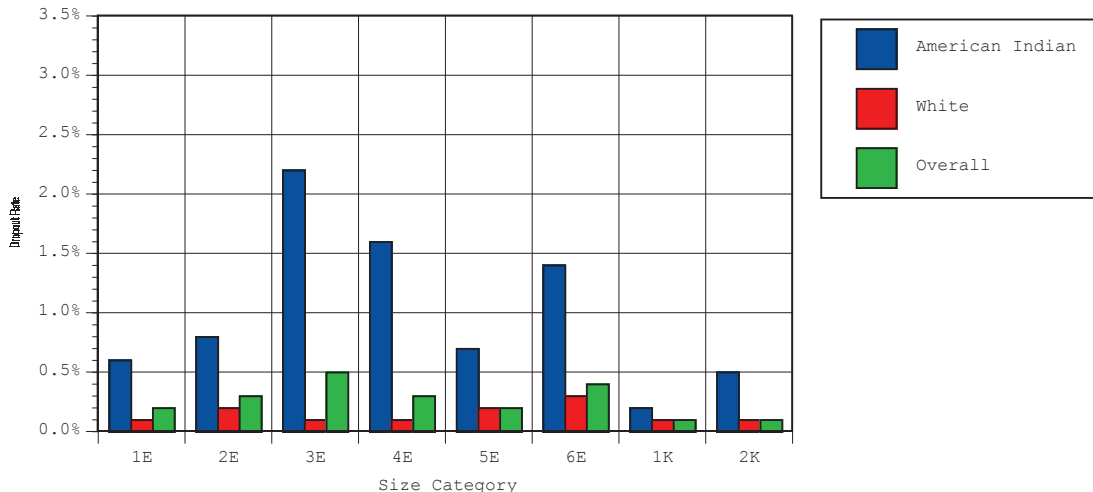
Figure 10: Five-Year Average Dropout Rates by District Size Category for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 9-12

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